Focused Solely on Christ
Col 1:12-23
SS Lesson for 02/03/2013

Devotional Scripture: Heb 12:2-3

OUTLINE

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Commentary on Getting Focused from Our Daily Bread
Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson
The lesson teaches the reasons why we should Focus Solely on Jesus Christ. The study's aim to discover what our text teaches us about focusing on Jesus because of His awesome greatness. The study's application is to apply the truths about Jesus' authority and greatness to our faith and practices.

Key Verse: Col 1:19

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

Commentary on Col 1:19 from Barnes Notes Commentary

[For it pleased the Father] The words "the Father" are not in the original, but they are not improperly supplied. Some word must be understood, and as the apostle in Col 1:12 referred to "the Father" as having a claim to the thanks of his people for what he had done, and as the great favor for which they ought to be thankful is that which he immediately specifies—the exaltation of Christ, it is not improper to suppose that this is the word to be understood here. The meaning is, that he chose to confer on his Son such a rank, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, and that there might be in him "all fullness." Hence, by his appointment, he was the agent in creation, and hence he is placed over all things as the head of the church.

[That in him should all fullness dwell] That in him there should be such dignity, authority, power, and moral excellence as to be fitted to the work of creating the world, redeeming his people, and supplying everything needful for their salvation. On the word "fullness," In John 1:14 the evangelist has said that Christ was "full of grace and truth." Of that "fullness" he now says that all the disciples had received; that is, they derived from his abundant truth and mercy grace to understand the plan of salvation, to preach the gospel, to live lives of holiness; they "partook" of the numerous blessings which he came to impart by his instructions and his death. These are undoubtedly not the words of John the Baptist, but of the evangelist John, the writer of this gospel. They are a continuation of what he was saying in John 1:14,15 being evidently thrown in as a parenthesis. The declaration had not exclusive reference, probably, to the apostles, but it is extended to ALL Christians, for all believers have received of the "fullness of grace and truth" that is in Christ. Compare Eph 1:23; 3:19; Col 1:19; 2:9. In all these places our Savior is represented as the fullness of God—as "abounding" in mercy, as exhibiting the divine attributes, and as possessing in himself all that is necessary to fill his people with truth, and grace, and love. Compare Rom 11:12,25; Gal 4:4; Eph 1:23; 3:19; Col 2:9. This is to us a most precious truth. We have a Savior who is in no respect deficient in wisdom, power, and grace to redeem and save us. There is nothing necessary to be done in our salvation which he is not qualified to do; there is nothing which we need to enable us to perform our duties, to meet temptation, and to bear trial, which he is not able to impart. In no situation of trouble and danger will the church find that there is a deficiency in him; in no enterprise to which she can put her hands will there be a lack of power in her great Head to enable her to accomplish what he calls her to. We may go to him in all our troubles, weaknesses temptations, and needs, and may be supplied from his fullness—just as, if we were thirsty, we might go to an ocean of pure water and drink.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson
The concept of the major outlines came from NIV Standard Lesson Commentary and was determined by reviewing the Scriptural Text.

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Lesson Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Colossians is one of four New Testament letters that the apostle Paul wrote during his imprisonment in Rome, about ad 63. The letter was written to the church in Colosse, a city in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The city was about 100 miles from the western coast of that land mass. Paul himself did not visit the city on his missionary journeys (Colossians 1:9; 2:1). The gospel was carried there by Paul’s associates (1:7). Paul apparently learned that the faith of the Colossian Christians was being challenged by other belief systems. We can infer from the contents of the Colossian letter that something or some things that brought together various pagan ideas and Jewish practices were attracting believers (Colossians 2:4, 8, 20, 21, etc.).

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Some Bible teachers think Colossians is Paul's most Christ-centered epistle. That is not an easy judgment to make, for all of Paul’s writings reveal his deep love for Jesus. What is clear is that when he sent this letter to the Colossians, he was concerned about their views and attitudes about Jesus. The evidence in the letter points to their having come under the influence of false teaching, and Paul wanted to correct that. There might have been a mixture of Judaism, asceticism, and Gnosticism being taught. Judaism taught that certain elements of the Mosaic Law needed to be followed as part of their salvation. Asceticism emphasized the necessity of following certain rituals of self-denial as part of their Christian life. Gnosticism taught that all matter, and especially the body, is evil and that Jesus was not truly human but only appeared that way. Because matter is evil, Jesus could not have been a true incarnation of God. This denied His deity. "Paul's patient correction of the Colossian believers should remind us that we need to keep the worship of Jesus Christ central in our churches" (Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary, Thomas Nelson). The Scripture text portrays in a very short and concise way the very heart of Christianity, which in its purest form is all about Jesus Christ and not about formalized religion. If we understand and believe these verses, we can get the rest of faith right. If we do not believe them or distort these verses, everything else we believe or do about faith will be compromised. No human being has ever known all that could be known about the Lord Jesus Christ. But the lesson this week outlines some of the basic facts that every Christian should know about Him. Grasping these rudiments and believing them will form the basis for a living and vibrant faith. Error will be dispelled, and the authority and preeminence of the Lord Jesus will be established.
Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

**Christ the Redeemer (Col 1:12-14)**

12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

**A Redeemer that qualifies us for an inheritance (12)**

*An inheritance of God's kingdom (Luke 12:32)*

32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

*An inheritance because of being an heir (Rom 8:17)*

17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

*An inheritance of the crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8)*

8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

*An inheritance for those who are poor in the eyes of the world (James 2:5)*

5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

*An inheritance guaranteed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:12-14)*

12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

*An inheritance that is rich (Eph 1:18)*

18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

*An inheritance that is a reward (Col 3:23-24)*

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

**A Redeemer that delivers us from the power of darkness (13)**

*Delivers from the darkness of wrath (Zeph 1:14-15)*

14 "The great day of the Lord is near — near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. 15 That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness,
Delivers from the darkness before the coming of the day of the Lord (Joel 2:31)

31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Delivers from the darkness of wickedness (Prov 4:19)

19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Delivers from darkness through fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-7)

6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Delivers from darkness through obedience to God's word (John 12:46-47)

46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. 47 "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.

Delivers from darkness through use of the armor of light (Rom 13:12-14)

12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Delivers from darkness through being a child of light (Eph 5:8-14)

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Delivers from darkness through letting my light shine before others (Matt 5:16)

16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

A Redeemer that provides forgiveness of sin (14)

Provides a forgiveness where sins will not be remembered (Heb 8:12)

12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Provides a forgiveness that sanctifies (Acts 26:17-18)

17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Provides a forgiveness through Jesus’ blood (Matt 26:28)

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Provides a forgiveness in accordance with His grace (Eph 1:7)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Provides a forgiveness that is a benefit of being a Christian (Ps 103:2-3)

2 Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — 3 Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

**Christ the Sovereign (Col 1:15-17)**

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether
thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Sovereign because He is the image of God (15)

Sovereign because Jesus has the very nature of God (Phil 2:5-7)

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Sovereign because Jesus is the exact representation of God (Heb 1:3)

3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Sovereign because Jesus is in God and God in Him (John 14:9-11)

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

Sovereign because Jesus is the image of God (2 Cor 4:4)

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Sovereign because He created all things (16)

Created all things because there was nothing made without Him (John 1:3)

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Created all things because all things came through Jesus (1 Cor 8:6)

6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.
24 “This is what the Lord says — your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,” (Isa 44:24)

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! (Rom 11:36)

**Created all things because as the Redeemer He formed us (Isa 44:24)**

**Created all things because from Him and through Him are all things (Rom 11:36)**

**Sovereign because He controls all things (17)**

**Sovereign because He has control over life and death (Matt 10:28)**

28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

**Sovereign because He is the only one who avenges (Heb 10:26-31)**

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**Sovereign because Jesus has control of all things (John 10:17-18)**

17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

**Sovereign because no one has authority over Jesus (John 19:10-11)**

10 "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

**Sovereign because Jesus chooses as He pleases (Matt 11:27)**

27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

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**Christ the Head (Col 1:18-23)**

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.
19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,
20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.
21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.
Head of the church (18)

*Jesus the one head of all things (Eph 1:9-10)*

9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

*God appointed Jesus to be the head over the Church (Eph 1:22)*

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.

*Jesus is the head because He is the Christ (Eph 4:15)*

15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

*Jesus is the head because He is the Savior (Eph 5:23)*

23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Head because all of God's fullness dwells in Him (19)

*Jesus has all the fullness of the Deity living in Him (Col 2:9)*

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

*Jesus is the image of God (2 Cor 4:4)*

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

*Jesus is the exact representation of God (Heb 1:3)*

3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Head of man's reconciliation (19-23)

*Head because Jesus died to reconcile us (Rom 5:10)*

10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

*Head because Jesus reconciled by putting to death our hostility (Eph 2:16)*

16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

*Head because Jesus reconciled us through Himself (2 Cor 5:18)*

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:
Conclusions and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the Commentary of J. Hampton Keathley

Summing up the great facts of our text, we see that Christ is:
(1) The Sovereign of the First Creation: He is the very manifestation of God by virtue of the fact He is the sovereign Creator God and the Sustainer of the universe (vss. 15-17). All creation, visible and invisible, all the angelic beings, have their source in Him.
(2) He is the Head of the Second Creation, the Church, which is His body: He is the very origin and source of the church by virtue of His resurrection as the first born to break the hold of death. As the resurrected Lord, He has conquered every enemy (death, sin, and Satan), or every power that stands to oppose God’s purpose for the human race. As the Head, He is to direct and empower the church to fulfill its purpose in the world, so the church must learn to live in submission to Him (vss. 18a).
(3) He is the Preeminent One: By virtue of Who He is (the Sovereign Lord, Creator, Sustainer, and Head of the Church), and by virtue of What He accomplished through the resurrection, God’s overall purpose is that Jesus Christ and no other might have preeminence and be Lord of all (vs. 18b).

There are undoubtedly many points of application that might be made from these verses, but four things stand out, especially in the context of the false teachers at Colossae.
1. Christ alone is to be the object of our worship, the sole means of deliverance from the power of darkness, and the means of transference into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son, the only one in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12), or religious system that can bring us to God (John 14:6).
2. No Christian leader, like Diotrephes of 3 John 1:9, should ever seek to have the place of preeminence, nor should Christians seek to put their leaders, no matter how skilled or dynamic, on a pedestal (cf. 1 Cor. 1:11-17; 3:4-9). Such actions not only usurp Christ’s place of preeminence, but they cause pride in people and cause them to get their eyes off the true source of blessing and fruitfulness in ministry (again cf. 1 Cor. 3:6-9).
3. The same also applies to the worship of angels. Angels, at least the good angels, are ministering spirits, sent out by the Lord to render service to the body of Christ (Heb. 1:14), but they are never to be made preeminent or worshipped in any way as in prayer or in seeking guidance from angels (cf. Rev. 19:10; 22:8). Our prayers are to be directed to the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. Finally, the figure of Christ as the head of the body, which is the church, is one of seven major figures that teach us a number of important truths regarding Christ’s relationship with the church, and ours to Him.

(Adapted from "The Supremacy of the Person of Christ" by: J. Hampton Keathley)

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Though God is a spirit, Christ is the observable example of the Father's character (Col. 1:15)
2. If Christ could create the world, He surely can supply our daily needs (vs. 16)
3. Christ holds authority over all that He has created
4. The Lord's planning and provisions for us are as eternal as He is (vs. 17)
5. Since the church is the body of Christ, each member is connected with every other member (vs. 18)
6. Our relationship with God depends not on us but on His having reached down to us through Christ (vs. 19-20)

Commentary on Getting Focused from Our Daily Bread

In golf and in life, we must focus on what matters most. In Philippians 3, Paul describes how that relates to the Christian. Rather than being distracted by lesser things, he wanted to focus on what mattered most. He said, “One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13-14).
“One thing I do.” In a world of distractions, it’s vital for the child of God to stay focused, and there is no better point of focus in the universe than Jesus Christ Himself. Is He what matters most to you?

Our prayer should be Lord, my focus is too easily distracted from You on to lesser things. Please draw me back to Your ways and teach me what’s most important. May I learn to always put You first. Amen.

We live most effectively for Christ when we keep our eyes on Him.

(Adapted from "Our Daily Bread" devotional titled Getting Focused dated June 18, 2011)